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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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The benefits of a small country as a member of NATO

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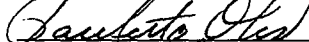
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Title:** The benefits of a small country as a member of NATO

**Author:** Major Vlade Bisoski, MKD Army

**Thesis:** The greatest benefit for the small country as a member of NATO is the ability to be in charge of its own destiny

**Discussion:** The paper first explores the difficulties of the scholars to define what exactly a small country is. In the end it defines a small country from the perspective of power, as a country that has less power than others in a certain context of relationship. Afterward, it glimpses at the roles of a small country throughout history, and the specific pattern of behavior it develops in interaction with the great powers. Then, after briefly looking at NATO as an alliance, it explores the benefits of a small country as a member of NATO, in particular: participation in decision making, international visibility, collective defense, burden sharing, ability to address new security challenges, democratic reforms, stability, improved relations among European countries, and prosperity.

**Conclusion:** One could argue that the most beneficial for a small country is its security. A country's democracy, stability, and rule of law of lay on the foundations set by the security of the country. On the other hand, the principle of consensus and unanimity gives something that small countries never had before. It involves them into the decision making process on an equal basis as the great powers. Nevertheless, when one combine these benefits one can conclude that the greatest benefit for a small country as a member of NATO is the ability to command their own destiny.

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## ACRONYMS

ACT	Allied Command for Transformation
EU	European Union
GDP	Growth Domestic Product
NACC	North Atlantic Cooperation Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PfP	Partnership for Peace

## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

“If you cannot beat them, join them.”<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the world 43% of the countries are less than 100,000 square kilometers, 34% are with population less than 10 million, and 46% are living with less than \$10,000 Growth Domestic Product (GDP) per capita.<sup>2</sup> Most can consider most of those countries as small or weak. Many of them arose after the Second World War as newly liberated countries from the anti-colonial movement around the world. An interesting fact is that “Europe presently has more small nations than it did during the Cold War, a development that springs from the disintegration of the continent’s last two multinational empires: the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.”<sup>3</sup>

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ended the Cold War as a victor. When NATO’s principal threat ceased to exist, many political analysts forecasted the end of NATO. Instead, NATO survived, transforming itself from traditional collective defense organization into modern collective security organization.

Europe has transformed also. Europe became one of the most prosperous places on Earth. Today the risk of large scale conflict in Europe is close to zero. Nevertheless, the newly created small countries, in search of their European identity, have expressed a desire to integrate into the Europe’s most prominent organization: NATO.

There have been numerous studies regarding the NATO's enlargement with the purpose to explain the great powers perspective. There are many mutual benefits for NATO and its members resulting from the NATO's enlargement. Meanwhile, there are many benefits for the new NATO member countries as well. However, what drives the small countries into NATO? Is it the prestige, economic benefits, or just survivability? Briefly, the greatest benefit for the small country as a member of NATO is the ability to be in charge of its own destiny.

## 1.2. Research Methodology

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the benefits of a small country as a member of NATO. In order to be able to proceed with further analysis on the benefits, the paper first will try to define what properties make a country small. Having in mind that "small" is a relative category, the paper will explore some of the efforts to define small countries. Afterward it will examine some of the historical roles of the small countries in their interaction with the great powers, and the patterns of behavior evolved based on those interactions. Then the paper will take a glimpse at NATO, briefly exploring it and its transformation into a collective security organization. In the end, the paper will list and analyze some of the benefits of NATO membership in order to see what is most beneficial for a small country.

## CHAPTER 2 – SMALL COUNTRY

### 2.1. Definition

Many scholars have tried to define the term "small country". Nevertheless few scholars could agree that there is commonly accepted definition. Zlatko Šabić divides all the attempts to clarify this term into definitional, constructivist, and sectorial approaches.<sup>4</sup> Here are some of the attempts of the definitional approach to clarify the term:



“By itself the concept of small state means nothing. A state is only small in relation to greater one. Belgium may be a small state in relation to France, but Luxembourg is a small state in relation to Belgium, and France is a small state in relation to United States.”<sup>5</sup>

“The term ‘smaller country’ seems to be reserved for large countries with small populations, small countries with large populations, small countries with small populations, and sometimes countries of any size that mostly mind their own business in world affairs.”<sup>6</sup>

However these definitions do not offer straightforward distinction whether one country is small. It is not surprising the authors of the Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank Joint Task Force on Small States concluded that “no single definition [of a small state] is adequate.”<sup>7</sup> Consequentially, the constructivist approach argues that “the conceptualization of the smallness ... depends on how a state is perceived by its members or others who relate to it.”<sup>8</sup> As such:

“A small power is a state which recognizes that it cannot obtain security primarily by use of its own capabilities, and that it must rely fundamentally on the aid of other states, institutions, processes, or developments to do so; the small power’s belief in its inability to rely on its own means must also be recognized by the other states involved in international politics.”<sup>9</sup>

“Small powers are almost by definition ‘local’ powers whose demands are restricted to their own and immediate adjacent areas, while great powers exert their influence over wide areas.”<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, the sectorial approach argues that the country's ability to influence affairs in the international system defines how big or small is that country. The premise of this approach is that "every state should be looked at as a political system that functions in various types of environments simultaneously."<sup>11</sup> The influence of one country in certain areas of international cooperation, rather than by its mere physical characteristics, determines how big or small that country is. In that manner:

"A small state ... is a state which is unable to contend in war with great powers on anything like the equal terms."<sup>12</sup>

All three approaches recognize that how much one country is small is relative and "depends upon how a small state turns its existing resources and capabilities to its favor."<sup>13</sup> There is no definition that can define the term "small country" objectively and in absolute manner. What is small in one context not necessary is small in other context.

Nevertheless, this paper will use the definition of the small country from the perspective of power. Small countries are countries "that have less power than others in certain context of relationship."<sup>14</sup>

## 2.2. Roles

From a geopolitical point of view, the country's geography and location in relation to a greater power determine the country's behavior in the international system. Caught among the greater power's spheres of influence, the smaller countries throughout history have been assuming specific roles in their interaction with the greater powers. Throughout history we can find small countries in one of the following roles: buffer, client, balancer, and risk-taker.<sup>15</sup>

A small country assumes the role of a buffer state when it lies between two or more larger powers. A buffer state maintains its independence as a result of the balance of power between the great powers. Consequentially, “once the balance of power or the parity between great powers breaks down, a buffer state tends to lose its autonomy and thus its identity as a buffer state.”<sup>16</sup>

A small country assumes the role of a client state when it is under the influence of a great power. The sponsor state provides military, economical, or political assistance and aid to the client state in substitute for “tangible and intangible goods and services such as military bases of commodities and loyalty or deference.”<sup>17</sup> Some small countries shifted from one great power to another as a result of the power competition between the great powers, especially in their pursuit for allies and the expansion of their sphere of influence. “The availability of other patrons who can render the same protection or material support, and the mobility of [the client] between alternate patrons”<sup>18</sup> gave client states a maneuverable space for pursuing of their own interests.

A small country assumes the role of a balancer state when it finds itself between two opposed, yet relatively equal great powers. “Sometimes a small power, through the accident of the strategic position or the energy of its ruler, can contribute useful if not decisive strength to one side or the other.”<sup>19</sup> Then the balancer can easily distort the balance of power between the great powers, and it uses this ability to pursue its own interests.

A small country assumes the role of a risk-taker when it “takes limited offensive posture against a great or superpower, often defying it with a certain degree of success.”<sup>20</sup> With careful consideration of the great power’s level of engagement in the world, the importance of the great power’s interests, and the response of the rest of the international community over the great

power's actions, a risk-taker country could successfully defy the influence from the great power and pursue its own interest.

### 2.3. Patterns of behavior

Small countries in their interaction with great powers assume their specific roles with the ultimate goals to survive and retain their sovereignty and autonomy. In their struggle to achieve these goals, the small countries developed specific patterns of behavior. They “develop their own strategies, chart their own courses, make their own decisions about how to meet whatever needs they experience and whatever desires they develop”<sup>21</sup> in order “to stay out of the hostilities”<sup>22</sup> or “to avoid conflict with great power.”<sup>23</sup> We can roughly categorize these behaviors as internal strength enhancement and external aid inducement.

The most common way of enhancing a country's internal strength is through increasing its military capabilities. Increasing the capacity of the military comes naturally from the desire of every country to protect its territory and established sovereignty. Logically it seems futile that a weak small country could successfully resist a great power's invasion. However, “a weak state needs to be able to hold enough to prevent a quick takeover, or until external help from other states can be obtained. Second, and more interesting, is the development of military power by a weak state in order to deter stronger states from attacking it.”<sup>24</sup>

Other small countries declare neutrality. With the declaration of neutrality, the country hopes that the great powers would leave them out of their spheres of influence. However, “neutrality requires the tolerance, agreement, or approval of the great powers – at least those in the immediate vicinity – to underwrite or guarantee the neutrality of the small state.”<sup>25</sup>

Additionally, the most common way a small country can induce external aid is through alliances. Alliances, as a formal agreement between two or more countries for achieving their common goals and interests, are an integral part of the contemporary international system. They provide the small countries the necessary help and resources for their survivability, but also impose certain obligations and influences. Nevertheless, as long as the benefits of the alliance are outweighing the costs, the alliance is acceptable.

### CHAPTER 3 – NATO as an alliance

NATO emerged after the Second World War as a response to the communist threat from the Soviet Union. NATO emerged as “an alliance which brings together free and sovereign countries in order to create a collective security system.”<sup>26</sup> In 1949, the first NATO Secretary General Lord Ismay simplistically described that NATO’s ultimate goal is “to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down.”<sup>27</sup> NATO offered protection to the European countries in the form of collective defense in return for financial and force contribution to NATO, acceptance of the NATO defense strategy, and provision of bases for NATO forces. Many small countries devastated by the war efforts saw NATO as a solution for their survivability on the international scene.

NATO together with the Warsaw Treaty marked the bipolar power struggle period after the Second World War known as the Cold War. During this period NATO acted as a traditional military alliance designed to provide security for its members against the Soviet communist threat. After NATO’s victory of the Cold War “without firing any shot”, and finding itself in no-threat environment, NATO “redefined its purpose: it now purports to be the first and foremost an association of constitutional democracies committed to the common defense of democracy

itself”<sup>28</sup> in order to justify its validity and existence. NATO redefined its role from collective defense organization and traditional balance of power security system into a collective security organization. In another words, NATO, from being an expression of democracy, became an instrument for democracy. “Although the Alliance remains committed to the fundamental task of security, consultation, deterrence and defense, it has added partnership, conflict prevention, and crisis management as part of its responsibilities.”<sup>29</sup>

The collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia produced many new small countries in Europe. These countries saw their future as a part of the Euro-Atlantic community. For that purpose NATO started the Partnership for Peace (PfP) as a forum for inducement of trust and cooperation between the former ‘adversaries’. PfP is “based on a commitment to the democratic principles that underpin the Alliance itself”<sup>30</sup> and became an important mechanism of NATO with the goal “to increase stability, diminish threats to peace and build strengthened security relationships between individual Partner countries and NATO, as well among Partner countries.”<sup>31</sup> Each participating country determines the level and pace of its commitment in PfP. “The main operational focus of PfP exercises involves preparations to take actions against any unanticipated breaches of the peace in the Euro-Atlantic region (and perhaps beyond) by dispatching crisis management and peacekeeping forces.”<sup>32</sup>

NATO continues its ‘open door’ policy to any European country prepared to undertake the commitments and the obligations of the NATO membership. NATO’s enlargement “is aimed at promoting stability and cooperation, at building a Europe whole and free, united in peace, democracy and common values.”<sup>33</sup> In 1995, NATO conducted a study on its enlargement “that considered the merits of admitting new members and how they should be brought in”<sup>34</sup> where are specified the requirements for the aspiring countries in their accession to NATO:

- A functioning democratic political system based on a market economy
- The fair treatment of minority populations
- A commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflicts
- The ability and willingness to make military contribution to NATO operations
- A commitment to democratic civil-military relations and institutional structures<sup>35</sup>

Today, the transformed NATO is an important contributor for a peaceful, stable and undivided Europe.

## CHAPTER 4 – BENEFITS OF A SMALL COUNTRY IN NATO

In the Report to Congress on the Enlargement of the NATO, U.S. Department of State Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs listed the following benefits to NATO from the enlargement: democratic reforms and stability in the region; stronger collective defense and ability to address new security challenges; improved relations among Central and East European countries; burden sharing; broader European stability; prosperity; and a stronger Europe as a partner for the United States.<sup>36</sup> Even though they are defined from a great power perspective (United States in particular), at a glance, they seem to be beneficial for the smaller NATO member countries as well.

### 4.1. Participation in decision-making

One of the unique characteristics of NATO is its decision making process. Members in NATO do not vote, instead they consult between each other, building up and modifying the solution until they reach a decision acceptable for all of them. The principle of consensus is the basis of NATO's decision making process. This principle enables the Alliance to make all of its decisions with common consent as an "expression of the collective will of all the sovereign states

that are members of the Alliance.”<sup>37</sup> It is a very powerful principle that ensures the unanimity of every decision within the Alliance.

The participation in the decision making process looks like it is one of the greatest benefits a small country can have as a member of NATO. Some of the small countries for the first time in their history are involved in the decision making process on the same table with the great powers on an equal basis. “There is much benefit for a smaller nation to be at the table where decisions are made. The situation would be gravely worse if bigger nations made their decisions without listening to the opinions of the smaller ones.”<sup>38</sup> As Otto Pick commented on the Czech Republic admission to NATO that “full participation and an equal partnership in international structures will make sure that never again will decision be taken about us without us.”<sup>39</sup>

The principle of consensus in the NATO decision making process could be a great leveraging tool. A recent example demonstrating how a smaller country can benefit from this principle could be seen in the Greece defying the United States over Macedonia’s admission to NATO.<sup>40</sup> Greece exercised its right to follow its national interest regardless the aspiration of the majority of NATO.

Nonetheless, whenever some differences arrive among the countries, this principle extends the decision making process considerably. Easily the member countries can turn NATO’s North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) into a “gigantic ‘talking shop’” and “mechanism for postponing decisions which, in essence had to be amended.”<sup>41</sup> If the member countries cannot achieve a common consent on some issue, then NATO cannot make a decision. The decision making process cannot be completed as long as any one country is not satisfied



with the proposed decision. In other words every member country in NATO possesses power equal to 'veto' over every NATO decisions, no matter how small or big that country is.

However, as a workaround for this situation, sometimes the great powers are acting outside NATO in so-called 'coalitions of the willing' in the pursuit of their strategic interest, where they can have the lead role and can dictate the situation as they desire. Recent examples of this trend are found in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.

#### 4.2. International visibility

Another benefit of the NATO membership is international visibility. Being able to equally influence the decision-making process as the great powers, especially in an important organization as NATO, gives the small country great international visibility. This enables the country to play much bigger roles in the international community, side by side with the bigger countries. The larger the international visibility of a country, the better is the country's pursuit of its strategic interest, both political and economical.

#### 4.3. Collective defense

The security of one country is a foundation for democratic and prosperous society. Everything depends on it. Without security, we cannot speak about stability, democracy, economic growth and prosperity. Bosnia and Kosovo are the most recent examples in Europe. One can find many such examples in Africa, Asia and South America also.

Historically, small countries join alliances in order to protect their territorial integrity and retain their sovereignty. Zlatko Šabić stated that "more than anybody else, small states are willing to hand over part of their sovereignty to international organizations, which could be instrumental in improving their prospects for development and, ultimately, their survival."<sup>42</sup> In

NATO, every member is obligated to contribute to NATO funds, contribute to NATO operations with their own national force, and to allow stationing of NATO forces on their territory.

Collective defense is the cornerstone of NATO. It is “imperative for European and transatlantic security”<sup>43</sup> through “maintaining the Alliance’s political cohesion and military capabilities to deter coercion and aggression and, if necessary, to conduct military operations to restore the security and integrity of the territory protected by the Alliance’s commitments.”<sup>44</sup> Even though the NATO’s creators envisioned it as a tool to protect the member countries against the Soviet threat, today when the Soviet threat is non-existent or marginalized, NATO is still valid as a ‘shield’ against all threats towards the democracy and the well-being of the NATO member states.

Being under the NATO’s ‘umbrella’ brings great benefits for the small member countries. Unable to defend themselves against the modern threat alone, their security depends on the Alliance’s solidarity. Instead of one small armed force, a large, technologically advanced, multinational armed force is guaranteeing and defending their sovereignty. According to the country-applicants for the NATO accession, this is one of the main reasons for joining NATO.

On the other hand, one could argue that Austria, Switzerland, Ireland, and Sweden as neutral countries are equally secure, thus stable and prosperous. However, one should not forget that the European Union economically and politically connects these countries tightly, except for Switzerland, with the NATO member countries and that “the alliance has provided a setting of safety for the European economic integration movement, from the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951 to today’s EU.”<sup>45</sup> In addition, for Belgium during the Second World War

“several neutrality policies adopted in the interwar period were rendered superfluous when Nazi Germany simply chose not to honor them.”<sup>46</sup>

#### 4.4. Burden sharing

“For each of the Allies, collective defense is less costly than national defense.”<sup>47</sup> Every member in NATO contributes financially to the NATO funds, with troops and material for NATO operations, and with personnel for billet filling throughout the various NATO institutions and commands. Even though the participation in the alliance is not cheap, obviously, the benefits outweigh the costs.

NATO has an extensive system for research and development. NATO Allied Command for Transformation (ACT) provides new concept and capabilities for the NATO forces. Every member country does its own experimentation. Nevertheless, NATO ACT provides a forum for sharing of the knowledge. All members can benefit from the knowledge-sharing, especially the smaller countries with limited funds for their own research and development.

Meanwhile, NATO Centers of Excellence provide advanced education and training to every NATO member country in order to ensure higher interoperability among the NATO countries. They provide variety of courses and seminars on variety of topics. This is a great opportunity for the smaller countries to educate and train their forces to the common NATO standards. It is more profitable for them to send their candidates abroad because of the lack of specialized institutions back at home, or the small amount of participants due to the size of their forces.

#### 4.5. Ability to address new security challenges

The atrocities in former Yugoslavia and the spread of the global threat of terrorism have imposed new security challenges to NATO. Without the Soviet threat, NATO started to transform itself in order to address these challenges. This proved to be a very difficult process for the small countries because they “possess limited budgets and small defense bureaucracies, [and] their capacity to restructure is limited.”<sup>48</sup> The received help and expertise from the larger countries is essential for the small countries, because “without transformation, a nation will no longer be able to contribute to international coalitions of the willing and able. Most importantly, a nation will not be able to turn its armed forces into a usable instrument of foreign and security policy.”<sup>49</sup>

The transformation of the security system to be able to address the new security threats is a great challenge for the small countries. Successful transformation could bring lots of benefits to them. “If interoperability has been rehearsed in an alliance structure, it considerably enhances the capability to participate in great power interventions. Consequently, if an intervention is done within the alliance structure, the influence of smaller nations is greatly increased compared to situations where such structure did not exist.”<sup>50</sup>

#### 4.6. Democratic reforms

As noted in the Report, several countries which became NATO members during the enlargement process “have adopted laws to provide greater civilian control over the military, eschewed nationalistic policies, expanded freedom for civil society and enacted other measures essential to the success of the democracy in the region.”<sup>51</sup> According to the strategy of ‘democratic enlargement’, outlined in the annual U.S. National Security Strategy, there is a close

connection between security, economy and democracy.<sup>52</sup> NATO as a guarantee of security serves as an important factor in the democratic reforms of the countries.

One of the requirements for NATO accession is to have a functioning democratic political system based on a market economy. Many of the former Warsaw Treaty countries started their transformation from communist into democratic countries. Their transformation of the political system helped them to become NATO members. The security and stability that comes with the NATO membership serves as a foundation for further sustainment of the democratic reforms in these countries.

#### 4.7. Improved relations among European countries

The enlargement of NATO proved to be important stimulus for ending the disputes among the countries of Central and East Europe. The former adversaries faced with the new situation, and the requirement for accession into NATO reached unprecedented agreements which resulted with stable interstate borders and cooperation. "These include: the Polish – Lithuanian treaty of 1994; the Hungarian – Slovakian treaty of 1996; a series of agreements in 1996 between Poland and Ukraine; improved relations between Italy and Slovenia; the 1996 treaty between Hungary and Romania; and the 1996 agreement between the Czech Republic and Germany concerning Sudeten and other issues."<sup>53</sup>

NATO has shown to be an important factor of promoting regional stability through "its tendency to moderate potential intra-Alliance disputes."<sup>54</sup> A good example of this is the 'cold war' between Greece and Turkey which was successfully contained. Another example is the 'cold wars' between United Kingdom and Iceland. This capacity serves as a warranty for long lasting peace and prosperity in the region.

Good relations are beneficial for everyone. They are requisite for peace and stability.

With peace and stability comes prosperity.

#### 4.8. Stability

The spread of democracy in the region directly contributes to the stability of the region, which is beneficial for all countries in it. NATO's framework of security and stability brings great economic benefit to the Allies and pursuit of prosperity.<sup>55</sup> That contributes for the well-being of the people, which obviously, is a great benefit for the countries which have undergone the NATO enlargement process and small countries which are already members of NATO.

The ability to improve the relationships among the member countries serves as important factor for stability of NATO and its members. Greece-Turkey, United Kingdom-Iceland are just few examples of contained crises that resulted in greater stability of those countries and NATO as a whole. A stable NATO serves as good foundation for a stable Europe and its wider region.

#### 4.9. Prosperity

Prosperity is the ultimate benefit for every member. A secure and stable country, where the democracy and the rule of law are dominating, brings economic growth and higher living standard for its people. All countries in NATO are "in zone with higher security level, which will change in a positive way its political and economic attractiveness."<sup>56</sup> This is beneficial for the new NATO members coming from East and Southeast Europe. They perceive the NATO membership as a favorable and stable environment for financial and economic investments.

Economic prosperity promotes democracy and political stability. "No society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the greater part of the members are poor and miserable."<sup>57</sup>

Economic prosperity brings happiness and joy and as Shimon Perez stated “higher the standard of living rises, the lower the level of violence will fall.”<sup>58</sup> Economic satisfaction of the needs of the people will ultimately result with non-violent resolution of the conflicts in the society. This, in other words, is the basis for democratic and political stability.

#### 4.10. Analysis of the benefits

There are many benefits for a small country as a NATO member. On first glance it seems that many of them are interdependent to each other, one benefit underlining the others, making it difficult to single out which benefit is more essential than the others. Therefore, what is the most attractive benefit that a small country can get as a member of NATO?

It is not essential for one country to be a NATO member in order to be internationally visible. There might be cheaper ways to achieve international visibility than NATO membership. Many countries invest in sports and culture in order to achieve international visibility through them. Besides, it costs less than NATO membership.

Furthermore, it is not necessary to be a NATO member in order to have democratic reforms. Most of the NATO members were democracies long before entering the NATO alliance. There are many democracies in the world which are not and do not intend to be NATO members.

The improved relations among the European countries are not exclusively a NATO by-product. The European Union, with 27 member countries, promotes peace, prosperity, stability, and overcoming of the divisions on the European continent<sup>59</sup>. The European Union is as important as NATO for good relations among European countries.

Even though burden sharing seems to be very attractive to the small countries one could argue that it is the most attractive benefit. If we look at it in absence of the other benefits, we seem to lose its essence and logic. Similarly, the ability to address new security challenges seems to lose its essence and logic when examined in absence of the other benefits.

Furthermore, stability and prosperity are very closely connected and are interdependent benefits. It is questionable that one can be beneficial without the other. Prosperity needs stability in order to sustain itself, and also without prosperity is very difficult to maintain stability. Additionally, they are closely dependent on security and democracy. Without security and democracy it does not make sense to discuss prosperity and stability.

Collective defense appears to be one of the most beneficial gains for a small country from NATO. This is very logical. In order to be successful and prosperous, a country needs security. That is why every country maintains its own armed forces, to guarantee its own security and the security of its population. Without security nothing makes sense. There is no sustainable democracy, stability, prosperity, or rule of law without security.

Even though security is very essential, not every country in Europe is pursuing NATO membership. Today the risk of large scale conflict in Europe is close to zero. As Eliot Cohen has stated "the age of the mass army is over ... the emergence of quality as the dominant feature in military power has rendered obsolete, if not absurd, today's system of calculating relative military power."<sup>60</sup> Moreover, the probability of large scale conflict in a country surrounded with democratic and peaceful NATO and EU countries is very small. One can conclude that today the benefit of collective defense is not the most essential for a small European country.



Nevertheless, the participation in the decision making process is very beneficial for a small country in NATO. This is especially true if that country has never before participated in international decision making. As Otto Pick mentioned one of the greatest benefits of Czech Republic membership to NATO is to be able to participate into the decisions made about the Czech Republic. NATO's decision making process does not favor any particular country, and every country's input is important for achieving a decision.

Small countries can successfully pursue their own national interest through the NATO decision making process. They can push its own national agenda through the process of consensus while negotiating with other countries to achieve an all-around acceptable solution. They can successfully balance its own interests, bow on one issue in order to gain in another. If used wisely, participation in the decision making process could be one of the most beneficial aspects of NATO membership.

If we consider all of the benefits, then it seems that the most beneficial aspect for a small country is to be able to control its own destiny. The participation in the decision making process will help the country pursue its own national interests and give the country a unique perspective on the other countries' national interests. The collective defense system will ensure the security and safety of the country, which will fortify the stability of the country, and support the democracy and prosperity of the country. Being able to control its own destiny and pursue its own national interests is the ultimate goal for every country.

There are several examples of small countries (as NATO members) able to fulfill their national interests without regards to the other NATO countries. Iceland successfully achieved their national interests in the "Cod Wars" with the United Kingdom. Iceland in three turns

successfully extended its exclusive economic zones beyond its territorial waters from 1950-1970. The United Kingdom found that against its own interests, Iceland had successfully used its NATO position and membership, and at the end the United Kingdom backed off, pressured by the other NATO members. Portugal's intervention in Angola is another example. From 1960-1975, Portugal successfully used its own dedicated NATO forces and equipment to fight the insurgency in Angola, without regard to other NATO countries. As the Netherlands archives suggest, "when it came to this issue, too, the Netherlands preferred dialogue with its NATO ally Portugal to sanctions and other 'extreme' measures as suggested by UN resolutions (in 1963 the Netherlands had only voted in favor of a selective, non-mandatory arms embargo on Portugal)."<sup>61</sup> Ultimately, Angola gained its independence after the Carnation Revolution coup d'état in Portugal in 1974.

## CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSION

Many scholars have defined what makes one small country small, but no one had defined the term in objectively and in an absolute manner. There are three distinctive approaches of defining the term: definitional, constructivist, and sectorial. This paper uses the definition of small country from the perspective of power: a small country is a country that has less power than others in certain contexts of relationship.

A country's geography and location in relation to a greater power could determine its behavior in the international system. Caught amongst the greater power's spheres of influence, smaller countries were assuming specific roles in their interaction with the greater powers. It could take on the role of a buffer state, client state, balancer, or risk-taker. Small countries throughout history have enhanced their internal strength through military build-up, declared

neutrality, or inducing external aid from alliances in order to survive and to retain their sovereignty and autonomy. Alliances, as a formal agreement between two or more countries, provide small countries the necessary help and resources for their survivability, but they also impose certain obligations and influences.

NATO is today's most successful alliance, which emerged as a response to the communist threat from the Soviet Union. NATO found itself in no-threat environment after the end of the Cold War. In order to justify its validity and existence, NATO transformed itself from collective defense organization and traditional balance of power security system into collective security organization.

NATO continues its 'open door' policy to any European country prepared to undertake the commitments and the obligations of NATO membership. NATO aimed its enlargement at promoting stability and cooperation in Europe. The new member countries will have to fulfill certain obligations in order to receive certain benefits. Such benefits are listed below:

- Participation in the decision making process
- International visibility
- Collective defense
- Burden sharing
- Ability to address new security challenges
- Democratic reforms
- Improved relations among the European countries
- Stability
- Prosperity

Some of the benefits are not very essential to the small countries. They can easily achieve them without NATO membership. Such benefits are: international visibility, democratic reforms, and improved relations among European countries.

Some of the benefits examined in the absence of the other benefits lose their logic and essence. One can conclude that even they can be very important, they are not essential for small countries. Such benefits are burden sharing, ability to address new security challenges, stability, and prosperity.

Moreover, some of the benefits are very essential for the small countries as NATO members. Collective defense and participation in the decision making process are a good example. Yet, we cannot erect one over the other. The security of the country is essential in order to survive and retain its sovereignty and autonomy. Participation in the decision making process is vital in order to pursue its own national interests.

If we combine these essential benefits we can conclude the greatest benefit for a small country as a NATO member is to be able to control its own destiny. Being in charge of itself is something that some small countries have not experienced for a long time. Finally, the ability to control its own destiny and pursue their national interests is the ultimate goal for every country.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Universal proverb
- <sup>2</sup> World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/> (accessed January 5, 2010).
- <sup>3</sup> George W. Grayson, "Foreword", in *Small States in the Post-Cold War World: Slovenia and NATO Enlargement*, ed. Zlatko Šabić and Charles Bukowski (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002), xi.
- <sup>4</sup> Zlatko Šabić, "Small States Aspiring for NATO Membership: Some Factors Influencing the Accession Process," in Šabić and Bukowski, 3.
- <sup>5</sup> Erling Bjøl, "The Analysis of Small Power Politics," in *Small States and the Balance of Power*, Insu Choi (Master's Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 1995), 14, <http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA303410> (accessed December 15, 2009).
- <sup>6</sup> Herbert Goldhammer, "The Foreign Powers in Latin America" in Šabić and Bukowski, 3.
- <sup>7</sup> Commonwealth Secretariat and World Bank Joint Task Force on Small States in Šabić and Bukowski, 3.
- <sup>8</sup> Jennie Harre Hindmarsh, "How Do We define Small States and Islands? A Critical Analysis of Alternative Conceptualizations" in Zlatko Šabić, 4.
- <sup>9</sup> Robert Rothstein, "Alliance and Small Powers" in Insu Choi, 14.
- <sup>10</sup> Annette B. Fox, "The Power of Small States: Diplomacy in World War II," in Insu Choi, 14.
- <sup>11</sup> Zlatko Šabić, 5.
- <sup>12</sup> Army Vandenvosch, "The Small States in International Politics and Organization," in Insu Choi, 15.
- <sup>13</sup> Zlatko Šabić, 6.
- <sup>14</sup> Insu Choi, 15.
- <sup>15</sup> Insu Choi, 19.
- <sup>16</sup> Insu Choi, 20.
- <sup>17</sup> Insu Choi, 21.
- <sup>18</sup> Michael Handel, "Weak States in the International System" in Insu Choi, 22.
- <sup>19</sup> Martin Wright, "Balance of Power" in Insu Choi, 24.
- <sup>20</sup> Michael Handel in Insu Choi, 24.
- <sup>21</sup> Joseph Malia, "Buffer States: The issue of Sovereignty" in Insu Choi, 28.
- <sup>22</sup> Annette B. Fox in Insu Choi, 27.
- <sup>23</sup> David Vital, "The Analysis of Small Power Politics" in Insu Choi, 27.
- <sup>24</sup> Michael Handel in Insu Choi, 30.
- <sup>25</sup> Allen Sens, "The Security of Small States in Post-Cold War Europe," in Insu Choi, 33-34.
- <sup>26</sup> NATO Update, <http://www.nato.int/docu/update/45-49/1949e.htm> (accessed November 28, 2009).
- <sup>27</sup> David Reynolds, *The origins of the Cold War in Europe: International Perspectives* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1994), 13.
- <sup>28</sup> Thomas M. Magstadt, *Flawed Democracies: The Dubious Political Credentials of NATO's New Members*, Policy Analysis No. 297 (CATO Institute, 1998), 1, [http://www.cato.org/pub\\_display.php?pub\\_id=1156](http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=1156) (accessed February 10, 2010).
- <sup>29</sup> Raymond A. Millen, *PAX NATO: The Opportunities of Enlargement* (Strategic Studies Institute, 2002), 3, <https://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB128.pdf> (accessed November 21, 2009).
- <sup>30</sup> The Partnership for Peace, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_50349.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50349.htm) (accessed November 28, 2009).
- <sup>31</sup> The Partnership for Peace.
- <sup>32</sup> David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance's New Roles in International Security* (Washington, DC: United State Institute of Peace, 1998), 21
- <sup>33</sup> NATO Enlargement, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_49212.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49212.htm) (accessed November 28, 2009).
- <sup>34</sup> NATO Enlargement.
- <sup>35</sup> NATO Enlargement.

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<sup>36</sup> Report to the Congress on the Enlargement of the NATO: Rationale, Benefits, Costs and Implications, released by the Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, 24 Feb 1997, [http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eur/9702nato\\_report.html#benefits](http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eur/9702nato_report.html#benefits) (accessed January 5, 2010).

<sup>37</sup> Consensus decision-making at NATO, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_49178.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49178.htm) (accessed November 28, 2009).

<sup>38</sup> Martti Setälä, ed., *Small States and NATO: Influence and Accommodation*, Occasional Paper No6, Atlantic Council of Finland, 24-25, <http://www.atlanttiseura.fi/tiedostot/op6.pdf> (accessed January 5, 2010).

<sup>39</sup> Otto Pick, "The Czech Republic and Western Integration," in *The Challenges of NATO Enlargement*, ed. Anton A. Bebler (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1999), 106.

<sup>40</sup> David Brunnstrom and Justyna Pawlak, *Greece stands by NATO veto threat for Macedonia*, Bucharest, Reuters (April 2, 2008), <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL0238277320080402> (accessed December 10, 2009).

<sup>41</sup> Jonathan Eyal, "NATO's Enlargement: Anatomy of decision", in Anton A. Bebler, 25

<sup>42</sup> Zlatko Šabić, 2

<sup>43</sup> Report to the Congress

<sup>44</sup> David S. Yost, 62.

<sup>45</sup> David S. Yost, 62.

<sup>46</sup> Allen Sens in Insu Choi, 33-34.

<sup>47</sup> David S. Yost, 62

<sup>48</sup> Rob de Wijk, "The Implication for Force Transformation: The Small Country Perspective," in *Transatlantic Transformation: Equipping NATO for the 21st Century*, ed. Daniel S. Hamilton (Washington, DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, Johns Hopkins University, 2004), 115.

<sup>49</sup> Rob de Wijk, 116.

<sup>50</sup> Martti Setälä, 24

<sup>51</sup> Report to the Congress

<sup>52</sup> Ole Wæver, "Widening the Concept of Security – and Widening the Atlantic?" in *The Trans-Atlantic Link*, ed. Bo Huldt, Sven Rudberg, and Elisabeth Davidson (Stockholm, SWE: The Swedish National Defense College, 2001), 39.

<sup>53</sup> Report to the Congress

<sup>54</sup> David S. Yost, 124.

<sup>55</sup> David S. Yost, 62.

<sup>56</sup> Irena Mladenova and Elitsa Markova, "NATO's Enlargement and costs for Bulgaria to join NATO," Final Report : Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, NATO, Individual Fellowship 1999-2001", <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/99-01/petkova.pdf> (accessed November 15, 2009).

<sup>57</sup> Martin Sherman, "What brings peace, wealth, or democracy?", *Middle East Quarterly* (September 1998), <http://www.meforum.org/403/what-brings-peace-wealth-or-democracy> (accessed February 08, 2010).

<sup>58</sup> Martin Sherman.

<sup>59</sup> Europe in 12 lessons – Why the European Union?, [http://europa.eu/abc/12lessons/lesson\\_1/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/abc/12lessons/lesson_1/index_en.htm) (accessed February 15, 2010).

<sup>60</sup> Colin S. Gray, *Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare* (London, UK: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2005), 172

<sup>61</sup> Web Dossier 'The Netherlands against Apartheid' - 1960s (3/3), <http://www.iisg.nl/collections/anti-apartheid/history/jaren60-3.php> (accessed February 15, 2010).

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